

Amherst Recycling & Refuse Management Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2012 • Department of Public Works • Conference Room, 4:30PM

Attending: Susan Morrello, Cristina Cox Fernandes, Laurel Dickey, Brenda Davies, John Root, Susan Waite.

Absent: Sue Cairn.

April minutes approved (unanimously).

Updates:

- Sustainability Festival – 1.4 tons of recyclable textiles were collected and taken to the Salvation Army. In the end nothing was taken by the Survival Center or Fisher Hospice, as there was a concern about timing and rental truck return. Bekki also felt more than half of it was unwearable. A lot of public education about the recyclability of textiles was achieved. Lessons learned: 1) Need written clarification of expectations regarding parties involved to avoid confusion and disappointment; 2) Need a banner, signage or T-shirts identifying the Committee; 3) Provide copies of the Earth Day newspaper insert at the recycling booth (Laurel could pick them up @ Northampton Gazette office); 4) Plan better for wind and/or rain. Karen Bouquillon (Northampton DPW) would like to borrow the textile recycling board that Sue M. made. Nice (festival) press in the Gazette (Hampshire Life) the week. Next year it will be held one week later to avoid conflict with school vacation and a parade is being considered. Susan thanked the committee members for their help.
- Trash-Free Lunch Day – Rescheduled for November 2013, Friday 11/9 or 11/16.
- Waste survey – Postcards that will notify residents about the survey were distributed to committee members. They will be bulk mailed from Springfield to all Amherst households per the town clerk's data base next week. A press release will be sent to area newspapers, and other media. All libraries will have hard copies of the survey. The Jones will have a poster about the survey.
- Foam subcommittee – Sue M. and Susan W. met with the Hitchcock Center to solicit their participation. At the subcommittee meeting, officers were elected. Brenda will be the secretary, Sue M. will chair the subcommittee. There will be a focus group held on June 4. Refer to subcommittee minutes. Committee was hoping that members from MassPirg would attend today's meeting, to discuss their plastic bag initiative to ban plastic bags in stores in Amherst, but they did not attend.

Create Taste of Amherst composting plan –

At the Garlic Festival, attendees sort their own waste. The Taste organizing committee is hesitant about asking people to sort their own waste. Their preference is to have attendees drop off their waste or others to sort. Susan W. feels we should try to accommodate this request. Sorters will ensure that the compostable waste is completely contaminant-free. The Lowell Folk Festival and the Franklin County Fair use this model. Colleen Kelly from the Hitchcock Center feels that it would be a missed public education

opportunity, and the rest of the Committee agreed. Option 1 would be for participants to sort their own waste, but this requires that infrastructure (sorting stations) be built or obtained (UMass or Amherst College might have these to loan – Brenda will talk to Amherst College, Cristina & Susan W. will talk to UMass). Option 2 would be to have volunteers sort the waste. This will require a larger number of volunteers. Possible volunteer organizations were listed with Susan W. by the committee with possible contact people included. Susan M. will send info to Susan W. about an on-line sign-up tool.

Discuss and approve report from Landfill Alternatives Subcommittee –

What was the original charge from Guilford and the DPW? What was the committee asked to do? Is the conclusion of the draft strong enough? Susan suggests that a section on cost needs to be added. Also add info on the CT waste to energy plant and that Massachusetts has a moratorium on building new W2E plants.

As subcommittee member Meg Vickery's RRMC appointment is expiring, Laurel moved to 1) Disband subcommittee and allow Sue M. & John work to revise the report (Meg will be asked if she wants to participate) with the suggestions from today's conversation (Susan W. has noted); 2) Reword report source as from full committee (rather than subcommittee). 3) Distribute revised report for review before a final review/vote for approval at our June meeting. Passed unanimously.

New Business-

Open meeting law. Be cautious about group email responses. Do not use "reply all" unless you are simply providing information. We must avoid expressions of opinion in "reply all" email correspondence.

Meg's tenure expires on June 1st. The committee now has a vacant seat to fill.